



# San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild CELEBRATING 50 YEARS!

September 2011



*The Gala is coming!*  
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Webmaster  
?????

This could be you!  
See inside for  
details!

# SFBAPG 50th Celebration!

Guild members, family and friends, past and present, are invited to join us for a GALA Event celebrating our Golden Anniversary.

When: 6:30 pm, Saturday, September 24, 2011

Where: Uptown, 401 26th Street, Oakland, California

What: Dinner & Golden Entertainment

Tickets: \$25.00 for guild members (past and present), \$35.00 for non guild members (to ensure your spot, make get your tickets before September 9

Buy tickets online at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/193368> or send check made out to SFBAPG to Michael Nelson, Box 1258, Vallejo, CA 94590 (Ticket order forms should have come recently in your Guild Membership Renewal Package as well.)  
Questions? Email: [sfbapg@gmail.com](mailto:sfbapg@gmail.com)



6:30 - 7:30 Social hour, cocktails and pre-dinner entertainment - Tinker's Coin Productions in the personas of Tiberius the Touched and Gloriana Baccigallupi will perform their version of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff." This Renaissance style show is filled with audience participation and lively action.

7:30 - 8:30 Buffet supper (see below for details on this tasty delight!)

8:30 - 10:30 Feature Entertainment & Special Awards Presentations honoring our guild's accomplished alumnus (the winners are secret, but some of our guild members are internationally acclaimed!).



## Gala Dinner Buffet

Did you know? Your \$25 ticket covers the cost of the buffet dinner. The entertainment cost are covered by the Guild. Expect a great dinner!

Miraglia Catering has a tradition of excellence in Bay Area catering since 1948. Today, it combines the best of the past with the fabulous cuisine of today. What people are saying...

"If you are looking for an amazing catering company this is the one!"

"Everyone raved about the food!"

"I knew that Miraglia had been catering some of the Bay Area's most wonderful weddings and parties. But, everything was even better than I had expected!"



## Menu

Boneless Breast of Chicken Piccata

Lemon Vegetable Penne with zucchini, yellow squash, tomatoes & mushrooms (Vegetarian & Vegan)

Sirloin tips, sauteed strips of beef with demiglace, garlic, mushrooms, and red wine

Creamy Old Fashioned Mashed Potatoes

Hearts of Romaine Salad

Seasonal Fresh Fruit Salad

Sourdough and Whole Wheat Rolls with Butter and New Balance Butter Substitute



Beverages include tea, coffee, lemonade, sparkling waters & ciders

A no host bar will have wine & beer. There will be a donation cup to cover the cost of the bar. You are also welcome to bring wine or beer.

## Entertainment

Two Top Award Winning Companies Highlight GALA Entertainment-

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Guild's Puppeteers of America Charter, we are planning some exceptional entertainment. We are excited that among our evening's performers we have two companies that have won the UNIMA Citation of Excellence, the highest national award for puppetry, founded by Jim Henson to recognize the nation's top performers. You don't want to miss this Golden Event!

Oregon Shadow Theatre is making a rare visit to the Bay Area to present "Thumbelina." Thumbelina is one of Danish storyteller Hans Christian Andersen's most delightful characters, a miniature girl born from a flower who has to find her own way in the world of nature. In this OST production Thumbelina journeys through a series of natural habitats to discover her home in the land of the flower fairies.

The visual design of this colorful shadow play is drawn from Art Nouveau, the decorative art movement of the late 1800s which is characterized by its flowing organic lines and its nature themes. Art Nouveau had a resurgence in the 1960s, and the art and music of the Rock 'n Roll era inspired much of the visual and aural design of the play. While the plot of the play follows Andersen's story, the script supports a comic sub text linking music of the 1960's and '70s to Thumbelina's desire to find her home in a land of flowers. The live music is performed on hammer dulcimer, electric guitar, and an assortment of percussion and sound effects devices.

Here is what the Seattle Times wrote about this UNIMA Citation of Excellence winner:

"THUMBELINA - Produced and performed by Oregon Shadow Theatre"

by Richard Farr

"Hans Christian Andersen never had it so groovy. This new shadow puppet version of 'Thumbelina', his story about a tiny girl born from a flower, gives her adventures a Woodstock Generation twist.

"Thumbelina's world -- a projection screen the shape of a setting full moon -- is populated by a rainbow cast of mice, frogs, birds and bugs. Her funny, engaging story is told by the multi-voiced talent of Mick Doherty, who is a cross between a hippie and a teddy bear, with beard borrowed from Tolstoy and grin borrowed from a leprechaun.

"Mick sits to one side in a cluster of musical instruments, strumming a bright red electric guitar, and tells how Thumbelina ('a flower child') meets, among others, a frog called Buford who has a thing about Elvis. ('Ain't nuthin' but a bu-ull-frog.')

"Thumbelina meets a mouse, Mrs. Strawberry Fields. The mouse's best friend is the mole Mr. Darkness ('Hello, Darkness, my old friend...'). And there's a fine talent show, with a cheesy six-legged host ('good evening, ladybugs and gentlebeetles') who does a pretty good imitation of Roy Orbison.

"The other half of the team, behind the scenes, is Deb Chase, who designs, makes and expertly manipulates the bits of plastic and paper out of which she and Mick spin their magic.

"Don't you wish they all could be California bu-ugs?' Truth is, the Oregon bugs seem to be just fine. On a sunny afternoon there was scarcely a seat at the Northwest Puppet Center to be had."

Bob Hartman

Bob Hartman is a puppeteer's puppeteer (when you can find his shows!) When it was announced at the August Guild meeting that Bob Hartman was performing at the guild GALA, members who knew his work asked incredulously, "How did you get Bob to agree to perform? Is he really going to be there?" Bob Hartman is a legend among Bay Area Puppeteers, a reclusive puppet genius that seldom performs, and when he does it is unforgettable. The guild has not seen his work for 20 years.

Bob Hartman as a writer-entertainer is impressive. His work is at home in a sophisticated fine arts theatre or a the rollicking comedy clubs. He has represented the U.S. in National and International Puppetry Festivals. He won the UNIMA award for excellence (with shadow puppetry.) Bob and his ultra hip rod puppet Wolf will offer canine, puppet wisdom to GALA goers.



"I watched his show twice, my jaw sagging on my chest. The best manipulator/performer I have ever seen. Hysterically funny." Mike Hares,  
London Puppetry Journal.

"Funniest puppets I've ever seen." John Fisher, Producer, Paul Daniels Show BBC, London.



## Five Decades Ago

Luman Coad

Fifty years ago about twenty members of the San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers' Guild gathered for the monthly meeting at the Mollé Realty offices on Broderick Street in San Francisco. The year had been extremely busy for California puppeteers. In February the second Regional festival, organized by Mollie Falkenstein, was held in Laguna Beach and in July the Puppeteers of American National Festival, organized by newly married Lettie Connell Schubert, was held at the Asilomar Conference Grounds on the Monterey Peninsula. Only one item was on the agenda for that fateful Sunday evening - should the Guild apply for a Puppeteers of America charter. As the question was discussed, the consensus seemed to be in favour of applying. However one voice was staunchly opposed.



*Lettie Schubert*

For several hours the group discussed the benefits and detriments of applying or not applying. Then just as we were about to vote, the one dissenting voice said, "But I don't understand..." and the discussion returned to square one. Again the pros and cons were discussed at length and finally we were again ready to vote. However the same voice said, "But what about...." and once again the discussion returned to the starting point. As the hours passed, we discussed the same points over and over and over. Tempers began to fray as exhaustion set in.

About 12:30, the person who could see no benefits from a Charter left to visit the washroom. The rest of us quickly voted to apply for a Charter and then we adjourned the meeting. Nearly everyone had left for home by the time Mike Oznowicz returned. The kicker is, twelve years later Mike, who could see no value in the national organization that fateful Sunday evening, was elected the President of the Puppeteers of America. You may notice, my name is not included as a Charter Member although I did belong to the Guild at the time. The Guild decided only Founding Members would be listed on the Charter, a decision I support. Having joined the Guild the previous year, I was the new kid on the block and was in awe of everyone. Lettie, Lewis Mahlmann, Mike & Frances Oznowicz, Pat Lavin & her mother Hanna, and Marion Derby were the core of the organization. Other Guild members included Tony Urbano, Frank Oznowicz, the Highstrung Theater, Jan Ballan, Les and Ellie Heath (the Leselli Marionettes), Bill Jones, Jerry Juhl, Wolo & Lydia, Roberta Mack, Bill Cassidy & Helga Williamson (Berkeley Puppeteers), Darryl Ferreira, Sally Hanson, and Robert Darling. There were other members but these were the folks who imprinted themselves on my memory. What was the Guild like in those days?



*Mike & Frances Oznowicz*

It was energetic, enthusiastic, caring, and above all, sharing. Ideas and assistance were freely exchanged. Pre-taped shows were the norm and members contributed their voices to audio tracks for other members. Whenever anybody had a problem, there would be plenty of suggestions and advice from the membership. The Guild's approval was the apex of achievement - whether it was a new puppet or a new production. There were numerous performing members including Jan Ballan, with a fun and lively Punch and Judy show, Tony Urbano, at the Storybook Puppet Theater in Children's Fairyland, the Oznowicz Family playing each summer at Yosemite, Marion Derby doing birthday party shows in the South Bay, the Heaths touring across the Western U.S., and the Highstrung Theater in their basement theatre in San Francisco. Within a year I joined the ranks of the performing members when Happy Hollow Park in San Jose hired me as the assistant puppeteer. Two years later I replaced Tony Urbano at Children's Fairyland - to the incredulity of most of the guild members. About the time I started at Happy Hollow, the Guild began to decline. Jim Henson invited Jerry Juhl, and a year or two Frank Oz to join the Muppets on the East Coast. Darryl Ferreira married Sally Hanson and began concentrating on his acting career, Tony Urbano returned to Southern California to create puppets for the Krofts' Les Poupees de Paris, the Highstrung Theater closed their basement theatre, Lettie Connell retired from performing when she married Gage Schubert, Pat Lavin entered graduate school in Chicago, and Marion Derby joined forces with Ben Blake who had arrived from Boston. Much of the energy vanished and the Guild reached its lowest point when I was elected president by default. Somehow we squeaked along. No matter what activities were planned, attendance was dismal. Helga Williamson followed as the Guild's president and she breathed new life into the nearly defunct organization by bringing in new members. My close association with the Guild ended when I moved to Canada and married Arlyn - the two wisest decisions of my life. So here it is, fifty years later and the San Francisco Guild of Puppetry is still chugging along. Like all organizations, its existence has cycled from highs to lows and back again. But will it still exist in another fifty years? Most assuredly provided the present membership attracts, welcomes, and nurtures the next generation of puppeteers. The future is up to you.



*Tony Urbano*

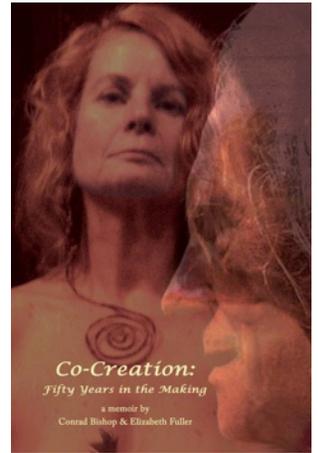
**Review - CO-CREATION: FIFTY YEARS IN THE MAKING**

Lee Armstrong, Guild Librarian

I attended the reception/reading/celebration in Sebastopol of the new book CO-CREATION: FIFTY YEARS IN THE MAKING, a chronicle and reflection of Conrad Bishop and Elizabeth Fuller's fifty years together as mates and collaborators in the making of theatre, kids, puppets, love, leaps of inspiration and folly. They played to a packed house and as they shared stories back & forth, the book came to life for the audience.

As they say, the book is neither "a how-to nor a confessional nor a road-to-fame chronicle; it's just our glance backward as we look forward into our seventies and the next span of our work." It struck a chord with many who have chosen the theatre and puppet professions, not for the fame and money, but for the love of the art.

I would highly recommend going to a reading. The next is scheduled at the Occidental Arts Center on Sunday, Dec. 4, 3 pm. Books can be ordered at <<http://www.independenteye.org/co-creation>>.



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**Pictures From the Day of Puppets at Fairyland**



# Cantastoria

Fredrika Lamphere

I was lucky to attend this years Banners and Cranks, Cantastoria Festival in New York. Not strictly a puppet event, Cantastoria is an Italian form of storytelling that uses banners and sometimes hand rolled crankies to tell stories often with a song; it is definitely a puppetry related art form. The festival was six evenings of short pieces mostly at the HERE Art Center in Manhattan. Many of the performers came out of the Bread and Puppet tradition; low tech, social relevant and aimed at adults as much as children. As the storytelling was so tight throughout, the whole festival made me think about what makes a story interesting, and what makes it relevant, whether intellectually, politically or emotionally and what makes a story engaging to either a twelve year old or a forty year old.



A number of puppeteers I have only read about for years but never seen, Chinese Theater Works, Peter Schumann, Great Small Works performed, but some of the strongest pieces I saw were groups like The Flying Donkey Puppet Company who could take a simple story and send it in unsuspecting places and then have it reappear throughout the night. Or the Dolly Wagglers "Who to Blame?" that took a yarn of a grandmothers upset birthday and pulled it through hilarious world catastrophes, flirting women, and lost jobs. (Their later more propaganda based but rousing "smash the bank polka" still has me humming from time to time while reading the morning paper.) Then some of the pieces were subtle and beautiful like Theater Oobleck's crankies of Beaudelaire poems. Also amazing was Peter Schumann's brilliant "Shoe." The flip style banners contained simple illustrations of a shoe and his rapid fire ruminations of purpose and work and play broken up by nonsense sounds was as thought provoking as it was hilarious. It was easy to see how he inspired a puppet movement that still recruits new disciples. It was inspiring to hear the festival curators Clare Dolan and Dave Buchen talk about how Great Small Works' Toy Theater Festival inspired them to start this festival.

The most moving piece I saw was at the opening for the festival. It was a two minute peep show for an audience of two: "The Murder of DeFerra "Dean" Gayman as Told to His Killer's Boss," the story of the police murder of a gay man cruising in the park with narration from statement from the officer taken from the newspaper and the images you peered at through the peep hole were abstract painting of flowers and brief text; it was so intimate and heart wrenching I found myself crying and remembering the power of puppet theater.

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## Calendar

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### Magical Moonshine Theatre

[www.magicalmoonshine.org](http://www.magicalmoonshine.org)

September 24, 11:00 am – 1:30 pm

Sonoma County Book Festival

Santa Rosa Courthouse lawn

11:30 am The Puppet Man

1:00 pm The Carnival Mask

In The Puppet Man, MMT's Michael Nelson creates his own version of traditional European street theatre. The performances are colorful, lively, spontaneous and ever-changing. In this unique theatrical experience, the puppeteer, puppets and audience respond to each other to create the play together!

Sep 29, 2011

Animalitos at the Kazakhstan Puppet Festival

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Magical Moonshine Theatre will perform at U.S. day at the first Kazakhstan National Puppetry Festival, host Almaty State Puppet Theater of Almaty Culture Administration, website; <http://eng.puppet.kz/>

### Storybook Puppet Theater

Children's Fairyland - Oakland

September 3,4,10,11,17,18,24,25

Beauty and the Beast. This is the classic tale of a young woman who learns to love a beast realizing that one should never judge a book by its cover. Puppets and script by Lewis Mahlmann. Production designed by Sheliah Beckett

### Guild 50th Gala Event

Uptown, 401 26th Street, Oakland, California

6:30 pm, Saturday, September 24, 2011

See article starting on page 1 for details

### Mill Valley Fine Arts Fest. Children's Grove

294 Miller Avenue, Mill Valley

Saturday, September 24th

10:30-12:30 Hands-On Craft Time with Tia

12:30 Fratello Marionettes

2:00 Tinker's Coin Puppets

3:30 The Gnome Show Puppets

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### Web Master Needed

Matt Baum who has been serving as our webmaster has moved to the LA area (best wishes and good luck, Matt!). This has left a need for someone technically minded to step forward and help out. Knowledge of WordPress would be helpful as well. If you are interested, please contact Art Gruenberg at [puppetart \(at\) aol \(dot\) com](mailto:puppetart@.aol.com). (replace (at) and (dot) with @ and ., but you knew that)

# September 2011

Special tear-out calendar! See Calendar listings for details on events.  
 Due to space limitations, only show titles are listed here.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 Young King Arthur	29	30	31	1	2 Beauty and the Beast	3
4 Beauty and the Beast	5	6	7	8	9 Beauty and the Beast	10
11 Beauty and the Beast	12	13	14	15	16 Beauty and the Beast	17
18 Beauty and the Beast	19	20	21	22	23 MV Fall Arts Festival 50th Gala Event The Puppet Man Beauty and the Beast	24
25 MV Fall Arts Festival	26	27	28	29 Animalitos	30	1

San Francisco Bay Area Puppeteers Guild  
5137 Robertson Ave.  
Carmichael, CA 95608



Map to the 50th Gala at  
Uptown Fender  
401 26th Street, Oakland

